

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

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APRIL 24, 1927



A PLAYMATE

by
Blanche Bingham Campbell

I have a playmate fond of me,
And it's a little apple tree.
It's fond of me, and I know why —
It bows to me as I pass by.

I catch my dress and dance around;
My little friend then bends way down.
And when I draw up very near
It tells a secret in my ear.

I often hug this little tree
When it holds out its arms to me.
How I love my little playmate
That grows beside the garden gate!

Clear-and-Bright

By Eva R. Baird

THE difficulty began with the notions Gwan Hsing brought home from school. The school was going to plant a tree on Clear-and-Bright, which, as every intelligent Chinese knows, is the day for Capping Graves.

The Shao family had always wanted to educate one of their boys, and when Gwan Hsing came, five years younger than Gwan Hsu and three years younger than Gui Jen (who, being a girl, no one thought of educating), and then there were no more babies, Father Shao thought they might manage to finance his schooling.

But all the results had not been good, as for instance this question of the Spring Memorial. This was not the first time that Gwan Hsing had come home for his weekly holiday with some revolutionary idea in his head.

"Such foolishness!" scolded Grandmother Shao, who was really the head of the family. "Why should the boy want to plant a tree, and where would he plant

it? And if it had to be planted, why of all times on Clear-and-Bright?"

"It's something for the future, Nai-Nai," explained Gwan Hsing patiently. "China has used up all her wood. You know yourself how scarce and expensive it is. Now, if we all plant trees in this generation, the next generation will reap the benefit."

"Hear the boy," groaned Shao Nai-Nai, which is the Chinese way of saying "Grandmother." "Worrying about the next generation, when my coffin is scarcely paid for!"

Now, every one knew that Nai-Nai's coffin had been paid for and standing in the back corridor for five years, waiting for its final use. It was a convenient place to store dry beans or hide the soap-powder. Gwan Hsing would never have been allowed to start to school if his grandmother's coffin had not been purchased, for no respectable Chinese lady of her age could have been comfortable without her final resting place being in readiness. But Nai-Nai chose to make her young grandson seem as unfilial as possible in putting forth his radical notions

of tree-planting as a substitute for grave-capping.

"I always thought the capping was rather good fun," said Gui Jen, when she and her brother were alone. "We always get the trip to Ancestry, and a picnic dinner. And no doubt they feel better."

"Who feels better?" asked Gwan Hsing.

"Why, our Elders and Ancestors whose graves we cap, of course," said his sister. Gwan Hsing laughed scornfully.

"Now, what difference could it make to them, I wish you'd tell me! Putting a clump of earth on top of a mound and tagging it with a scrap of cloth! Do you think the spirits care for that? They probably think it's a joke. That old uncle on the hill whose clump always falls off — don't you suppose he has a good laugh every year?"

"Hush, Brother, hush," said Gui Jen reprovingly. But she laughed herself at the recollection. "Ancestry," as the Shao children always called the family burying-ground three miles out in the country, was on a hillside, and there was one grave on the brow of the hill that the clump of sod would never stay on. As little children they had always enjoyed watching it sway in the spring wind and finally come tumbling down, while their parents were capping the lower graves.

But Father Shao settled the question of the annual celebration by saying most decidedly that Gwan Hsing might join in whatever new-fangled notions the school might have, the morning of the holiday (that was the time set for their Tree Planting), but that the family would pay their respects to the graves at Ancestry in the afternoon. After that, Gwan Hsing had no more to say.

But Gui Jen whose hands were busy about her household tasks kept thinking about her brother's desire to plant a tree themselves. What would they plant and where would they plant it, she wondered — that is, of course, had they been allowed to plant anything. The only tree the Shao family possessed was a beautiful magnolia which stood in the inner court. It was getting ready to bud, and the late spring would find it a glory of fragrant bloom.

Gui Jen looked curiously at the flowerpot which had been fastened securely to a starting branch. She knew its purpose. Filled with earth it furnished a new rooting place for another tree which got its start from the newly growing branch of the old.

Suddenly Gui Jen laughed. Planting trees wasn't such a new thing, after all. The old magnolia was ready to start a new one, and the whole Shao family, even Nai-Nai, approved of the proceeding. Of course she knew that this was not the kind of tree her brother wanted to plant, he was thinking of a fir or poplar, or possibly a fruit tree of some kind, something that would be useful to the next generation.

As Gui Jen was considering the magnolia and its possibilities, her father came through the court. Gui Jen addressed him respectfully.

"Isn't the new start on the magnolia tree ready to be taken off this spring?" she asked. He stopped and looked at it critically.

"Yes, I guess it is," he said. "I can't remember that any one has asked for it, either. But some one always wants a start from our magnolia tree."

"I was wondering if we couldn't take it out to Ancestry," said Gui Jen mildly. "There where the wind always blows the cap off of Grand-Uncle's grave, a magnolia tree would be a shield. A whole row of magnolias would be beautiful."

Nai-Nai had stepped out into the court as Gui Jen spoke. The old lady quickly grasped the situation, but in no way connected it with Gwan Hsing's desire to plant a tree.

"Well said, well said!" she beamed approvingly. "That grave should never have been placed where its cap would blow off so easily. The child's idea is good, to make a shield of magnolia trees. This side of the hill will furnish graves for the Shao family for generations yet to come."

"If it pleases you, Honorable Mother" said her son, "we will transplant this baby magnolia on Clear-and-Bright."

"It pleases me greatly," agreed the old lady.

"And as you say, Great Source of Wisdom," went on her son, "the Shao family will not use the other side of Ancestry Hill for generations yet to come. The poplar tree grows swiftly. If it would add to the joy of your declining years, to see a poplar grove on the farther hillside, both your elder and your younger offspring will hasten to the digging up of earth and the planting of the first poplar tree."

Gui Jen could scarcely believe her ears as she listened to her father's audacious proposal. A poplar tree — the very thing her brother wanted.

But Shao Nai-Nai gave her son one quick glance of understanding and turned

toward the moon-gate which led into the house. She paused in its circle and glanced back. Her head was lifted proudly.

"The Shaos were ever thinkers," she said. "Their minds still work in cleverness. Let the earth be dug to plant the magnolia tree that our ancestor's grave may no more lose its cap. And let my grandson, the last hope of the House of Shao, plant the first tree of the poplar grove. So shall we bless the generations that have passed and those that are to come."

She did not see Gwan Hsing come in the outer entrance from the street as she turned in the moon-gate. The boy gazed in amazement. Shao Nai-Nai passed on into the house, and her son followed her, leaving Gui Jen to explain to her brother the miracle that had happened.

And so it came, on Clear-and-Bright, that the Shaos made their annual trip to Ancestry. There was a picnic dinner, besides the sacrificial food for the ancestors. The graves were capped with clumps of earth and tagged with flying colors. The cap of Grand-Uncle's grave blew off, just as it always did. But Gui Jen and Gwan Hsing were so busy planting trees that they never noticed it.

The Cat and the Captain

BY ELIZABETH COATSWORTH

CHAPTER III

After supper, the Captain got out his spectacles, lit his pipe, and began reading the newspaper. "Humph," he would say sometimes, or "Well, well," or perhaps, "They need some honest sailors in the senate." But this evening he found something to read to the Cat. He always acted as though the Cat understood him for it kept him from being lonely.

"Here's a poem," he said looking up, "called The Bad Kittens." Then he read aloud slowly:

You may call, you may call,
But the little black cats won't hear you,
The little black cats are maddened
By the bright green light of the moon.
They are running and whirling and
hiding,
They are wild who were once so con-
fiding,
They are mad when the moon is rid-
ing—
You will not catch the kittens soon!

They care not for saucers of milk,
They care not for pillows of silk,
Your softest, crooningest call
Means less than the buzzing of flies.

They are seeing more than you see,
They are hearing more than you hear,
And out of the darkness they peer
With a goblin light in their eyes!"

But the Cat was not interested. He yawned. His mouth opened very wide, showing his sharp curly tongue, and the whiskers which had been lying along his cheeks stood out till they nearly touched in front of his nose. The Captain quite understood and after that read to himself.

Tick-tock-tick went the cuckoo clock. The Cat's big eyes watched it. He knew that foolish bobbing bird would soon slam open his little door and come out, and call "Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo" at the top of his lungs and pop inside his little door again, slamming it behind him. He hated that cuckoo, but it had always been beyond his reach. To-night he noticed that the big wing chair was nearer the clock than usual. Perhaps he could reach it, if he ran across the rug, up the seat of the chair to the back, and so straight at the cuckoo — well, it was worth trying. He waited. He was very patient. The Captain went on reading. At eight o'clock promptly the little door of the clock opened and out popped the wooden cuckoo.

"Cuckoo," he began, bowing, "Cuckoo, cu—" He didn't finish. There was a black rush across the rug, up the seat of the chair to the back, and so straight at the cuckoo. Then an awful crash. Down came the clock, the Cat and the cuckoo on the floor all together.

"Bless my soul!" cried the Captain, jumping up. "Bless my soul!"

"Cuckoo! cuckoo!" squawked the cuckoo.

The Cat said nothing, but hurried under the sofa when he saw the Captain coming. The Captain was a patient man but he loved that clock.

"I'll teach you, you pirate!" he said to the Cat, trying to reach him under the sofa. But whichever side of the sofa the Captain was on, the Cat always managed to be on the other. Finally the Captain, very red in the face, got down on his stomach to reach better. Susannah heard him breathing hard, and stuck her turbaned head into the door.

"What's de trouble, boss?" (she never could learn to say "skipper").

But the Captain even now didn't want to admit how bad the Cat had been, especially to Susannah.

"I'm looking for my handkerchief," he said, getting up, still very red in the face.

Susannah began to giggle. "I bet dat han'kerchief, boss, is a mighty good dodger!"

The Captain didn't say anything but he again, put the clock gently on the shelf to mend in the morning when the time was better, and went back to his air. When the Cat was sure that he was quite settled again with his pipe and his paper, he came out from under the stove, stretching and yawning as though he'd been having a nap. Sometime he wasn't very proud of himself when he knew that the Captain was really worried about the clock's being broken. It he wasn't ready to admit how he felt yet. Down on the hearth-rug he sat and wash his paws that had got dusty under the sofa. His back was to the windows, but suddenly he had a feeling that he was being looked at. It couldn't be the sannah. He had heard her go upstairs to bed. And it couldn't be the Captain or he was puffing his pipe behind the newspaper. Quickly the Cat turned his head and looked at the window nearest the door. There was a face flattened against the pane, with eyes staring into the room. But before the Cat could see who or what it was, the face had disappeared, and nothing could be seen in the dark leaves of the white lilac still moving a little.

(To be continued)



Uncertain April

By RUSSELL GORDON CARTER

We want to go to Grandma's house
To spend this rainy April day;
But all the trolley cars that pass
Are going just the other way.

My brother has no faith at all;
He says we'll have to walk — alack!
But I intend to stay right here;
I'm sure those trolleys *must* come back!



BY
WATSTILL
HASTINGS
SHARP

Text: Who is my neighbor?

—Luke 10:29

AS time goes on, the people of a nation lay aside old manners and come to new ways of doing things. So we don't take a week to go by coach from Boston to New York, and instead of sending a pack train winding through the Bad Lands with the mail we send a 500-horsepower airplane roaring over the peaks at 100 miles an hour. So we don't pray for rain as our fathers used to, but work on a machine that will shoot electrified sand into a cloud and make a rainfall. And all this in one hundred years!

But for all of this "progress" there is a whole lot to be learned from some of the old customs of a people. I like to read about the ways of a simpler day. Of course our forefathers here and in England didn't have open plumbing and Frigidaires, but at the same time we know that they weren't so busy with teas, and lawsuits, and committee meetings, and Fords and oil wells and they did have a lot more time than we do for walking, and chatting, and swapping, and ballads by their roaring fires. So much for a contrast of progress and pleasure.

One of the fine old English customs — I hope it stands today and as long as

London Bridge! — was the custom known as Love Day.

"Love Day" might suggest a number of ideas to us, depending upon our age and the fullness of the spring moon. But this Love Day was a celebration of the kind of love that Saint Paul wrote about in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians — the kind of love that seeketh not its own.

On one day each spring in Merrie Old England any farmer who thought that another farmer had more spring plowing than he could get through with, would hitch up his team, and would drive over to his neighbor's.

"What, ho! neighbor!" he would shout as he came in sight of Goodman Lipton following the plow behind his strong horses.

"Gud rest ye! Neighbor Cromwell!" Goodman Lipton would reply.

"'Tis Love Day, Neighbor Lipton! Where shall I lend a hand?"

"Take yonder field, Neighbor Cromwell, an' ye please. Set in deep, and your good scratching will help me face the season all done and ready for the sowing."

And so all day up and down the fallow of Goodman Lipton would Neighbor Cromwell drive his sturdy pair of horses, the plow "set in deep" and the "good scratching" done (I hope) by supper time.

Were there wages? No. This was Love Day in Merrie England — as wholesome and neighborly and hearty a good old custom as ever was. Love Day was the one day in spring time when a farmer went, without wage or invitation, to help a good neighbor who was "behind" in spring plowing.

How about a little more of that spirit between you and me?

I'm Glad

By MARGERY FIELD

Our kitten sleeps the whole day long
All curled up in a ball.
My dog is pretty lazy too,
And never works at all.

I wish I were a dog or cat,
Then I could have my way
And never, never go to school
But just go out and play.

But Kitty cat — she can't play ball,
And Tige, he has no bike;
And neither of them gets ice-cream
Most every Sunday night.

So, — after all, I'm mighty glad
My name is Billy Brown
Instead of what my Sister calls,
"Her little ball of down!"



Essays must be received at the office of the Massachusetts Federation of Churches by June 1, 1927, with a number, or assumed name, and a sealed envelope marked in the same way on the outside, and enclosing the real name and address.

The judges, whose names will be announced later, will consider "cogency of argument and illustration, style, Christian spirit, and practical suggestions for combating the evil."

It is suggested that each church school might arrange a preliminary contest and send in the winning essays.



THE BEACON CLUB

THE EDITOR'S POST BOX

Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

308 DANFORTH ST.,
PORTLAND, ME.

Dear Editor: I am ten years old and am in the seventh grade. I should like to correspond with some one about my age. I am very much interested in both stamps and coins. My father has a wonderful collection of coins and quite a good one of stamps. My Sunday-school teacher is Mrs. Small.

Sincerely,
LENA LEVERETT.

LOCK BOX 25,
GRAFTON, MASS.

Dear Editor: I am a member of the Beacon Club and go to the Unitarian Church. There are five members in our class. I have a very nice teacher; her name is Miss Wheeler. I read *The Beacon* every Sunday and enjoy it very much. I am twelve years old. I like to read the letters that the boys and girls write very much.

Sincerely yours,
LUCILLA ANDERSON.

152 BREEZEHILL AVE.,
OTTAWA, CAN.

Dear Editor: I go to the Unitarian Church in Ottawa. Mrs. Casson is my Sunday-school teacher. I am twelve years old. I should like to belong to the Beacon Club and wear a pin. I should also like to correspond with some other girl of my age.

Sincerely yours,
RACHEL HYDE CLARKE.

1927 EAST LYNN ST.,
SEATTLE, WASH.

Dear Editor: I should love to belong to the Beacon Club and would be very proud to wear the Club pin. I get *The Beacon* every Sunday and enjoy the stories very much.

I am fourteen years old and go to the University Unitarian church in Seattle. Dr. John Carroll Perkins was our minister until he went to Europe, but Dr.

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.

OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.

The Sky Battle

By FRANCILLA MASON (AGE 15)

The clouds are like some little boats
Adrift in the sea-blue sky,
They float so smooth and slowly
In their ocean home on high;
But soon there comes a battle,
The wind it moans and blows,
The cloud ships bank together
Against the coming foes.

The sullen thunder rumbles,
The lightnings jagged flash
Across the dark sky tumbles
Till, with a roar and crash,
The battle's quickly ended;
The frightened ships make way—
And the rain pours down as if the sea
Had overflowed that day.

Schubert

By RICHARD SCHULTES (AGE 12)

Franz Peter Schubert was born near Vienna, Austria, in 1797. His father was a peasant schoolmaster. Schubert was taught the violin by the choirmaster. When he was sixteen he composed his first opera. At seventeen he began to write songs. Between seventeen and eighteen he composed 144 songs, including his masterpiece, "The Erl King." Schubert led a somewhat Bohemian life; he never married and was often out of funds. He was much underpaid, his best songs bringing twenty cents each! Schubert really created the art of song. He died in Vienna in 1828.

Harry Foster Burns took his place. I should love to have some girl who lives back East write to me. My chum, Marcia T. Marple, is also writing to you and I hope that we shall both become Beacon Club members.

Yours sincerely,
MARY LOU MORRISON.

PUZZLERS

Twisted Vegetables

1. Rsiasnpp.
2. Bugaraat.
3. Brhbura.
4. Eedniv.
5. Awleomtnsre.
6. Eletcut.

ROBERT CONGDON (8 YRS.)

Anagram Sentences

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with words made from the letters in ORANGE, using *all* the letters *once* in *each* sentence. No word is used twice:

1. If you are **** there do ** to see him.
2. He read a story about *** ****.
3. Neither *** *** size matters to him.
4. The old *** was drawing a load of ***.
5. That *** is *** I use for dusting.
6. There is ** need to show such ***.

—The Target

Charade

My first, a color, — hue of sky;
My second means a dolt, a guy;
My whole, a bird of azure coat
But none admires his harsh shrill note.

M. L. H.

Answers to Puzzles in No. 28

Enigma.—Ask Me Another.

Charade.—Time-piece.

Twisted Flowers.—1. Lily of the Valley. 2. Tulips. 3. Daffodil. 4. Narcissus. 5. Hyacinth. 6. Crocus. 7. Snowdrop. 8. Gladioli. 9. Calendula. 10. Cosmos.

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